

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

XMT AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BISSAU

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 28, 1978

FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S NOON BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL

VERSION WILL FOLLOW.

Q: CLAUDIA TOWNSEND OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS OFFICE CHECKED WITH THEIR CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND NOTED THAT, IN HER WORDS, "THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE SCHEDULED MEETING OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND CONGRESSMAN DIGGS IN NIGERIA," WHICH MEETING I DISCOVER WAS REPORTED IN A PAGE ONE STORY IN THE WASHINGTON STAR ON MARCH 23RD AS WELL AS IN A DIGGS OFFICE PRESS RELEASE ON THAT DAY.

MY QUESTION IS THIS, SINCE YESTERDAY, SOME 50 REPORTERS WERE TOLD AT A BRIEFING IN THIS ROOM ON THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO AFRICA THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS CARTER-DIGGS MEETING, IS THIS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT A PRESIDENTIAL MEETING WITH A CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN OVERSEAS DUE TO A BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATIONS, OR INTELLIGENCE, OR WHAT?

A: WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE BRIEFER YESTERDAY HAD IN MIND WHEN HE ANSWERED YOUR QUESTION. THE ONLY THING I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT IT IS, I'M AWARE THAT THE CONGRESSMAN IS IN AFRICA AS PART OF HIS CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

Q: RIGHT.

A: BUT THAT'S AS FAR AS I CAN TAKE YOU.
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Q: TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE DID THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA, THE WHITE HOUSE OR THE STATE DEPARTMENT EXPRESS TO CONGRESSMAN DIGGS A FEELING THAT IT WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS DIALOGUE WHEN THE PRESIDENT MEETS WITH THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT?

A: I JUST DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA.

Q: IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE NOT AWARE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT EVER URGED MR. DIGGS TO BE ON HAND, ARE YOU?

A: I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FACTS ARE, NO. I'M NOT AWARE.
COOPER

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NNN

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